The Earliest Version of the Chinese "Little Red Riding Hood": The Tale of the Tiger-woman
Author(s): Huang Chih-chun, Huang Chengzeng, Annette Specht, Günter Lontzen and Jacques Barchilon
Source: *Merveilles & contes*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 1993), pp. 513-527
Published by: Wayne State University Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41390379
Accessed: 03-12-2015 20:30 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wayne State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Merveilles & contes*.

http://www.jstor.org

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

III.
TEXTS AND STORIES

THE EARLIEST VERSION OF THE CHINESE "LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD"

Presented by Dr. Günter Lontzen

With respect to the question of whether Perrault, in writing his tale "Le petit chaperon rouge" in 1695 and 1697, went back to an orally transmitted subject, Alan Dundes refers to the similarity of the folkloric versions of the French tale from the second half of the nineteenth century to an East Asian one, known since the beginning of the twentieth century under different titles, such as "The Panther," "The Tiger Grandma," or "Grand-aunt Tiger." Dundes calls it the "Chinese version" of the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" (AT 333).

The similarity is based on the one hand on the common relationship to the tale of "The Wolf and the Kids," which in its turn must be considered a variation of Phaedrus's fable "Haedus et Lupus" (The Kid and the Wolf), and on the other on several corresponding motifs which conclude the tales: the cannibalistic motif of eating the grandmother or the child, of going to bed together, and the motif of going outside to defecate with a rope tied around the child's leg. Dundes draws our attention to the fact that the sinologist and folklorist Wolfram Eberhard refers to a text of the Chinese tale, which he ascribes to the seventeenth century and therefore before the time Perrault's tale was written.

This text, however, was first printed in 1803 in the compilation *Guangyu chuxinzhi* by Huang Chengzeng. The tale comes from Huang Chih-chün, who was born in Xiuning in the south of the prefecture of Huizhou, in the southernmost

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

region of the province on Anhui and directly in the neighborhood in which the tale is set. He lived from 1668 until 1748, so that the text must have been written at the end of the seventeenth or in the first half of the eighteenth century. Not much is known about the author. His personal surname (*zi*) given to young men at the age of twenty, was Shimu, and he passed the first official examination and was therefore probably a public servant.

This text, until now not translated into a European language, shows remarkable differences to the well-known later versions. The relationship to the tale of "The Wolf and the Kids" is absent, for instance, the central motif of the gulping beast forcing its entry into the protecting house in order to get at its prey, as in "Haedus et Lupus." The course of action at the beginning of the tale is also different. In addition, we find an epimythium, known in China only since Buddhist times, derived from a proverb, recalling Basile's moral-like proverbs. However, the moral does not speak to children, as in "Haedus et Lupus" (*Precepta avdire parentvm, semper lavs est natorvm* [To obey the parent's instructions is always a laudable deed for children]), but to a person's self-determination.

In the same way, the text is interesting because of its perfectly logical conception, for example, in the way the reason is presented for why the rope is tied to the girl's leg. In reality it can never be an instrument of captivity for adolescents, and the girl's age is expressly specified as older than ten years. Unfortunately, we cannot consider in detail here the arguments resulting in the existence of these two differing versions of the Chinese tale for Perrault's manner of developing his tale "Le petit chaperon rouge."

The Chinese text of the tale was made available courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge. It was trans-

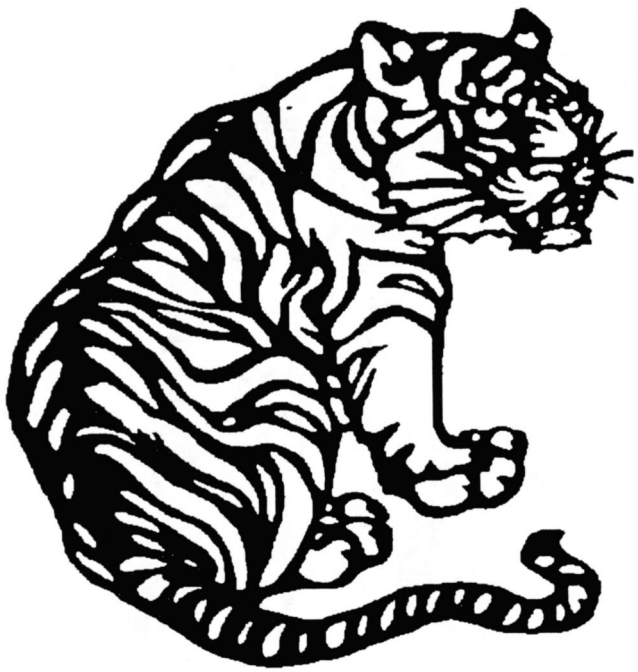
This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

lated—as literally as possible—by Annette Specht of the Department of Chinese, University of Bonn, Germany.

Works Consulted

Dundes, Alan. *Little Red Riding Hood. A Casebook*. Madison/London, 1989.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

The Tale of the Tiger-woman

by Huang Chih-chün*

omeone told me the following on the subject of tigers: The district She[1] is located in the Wan Mountains, and there are many tigers there.[2] One of them was an old female. She could at times transform herself into a human in order to harm people.

In that area there was a montagnard-peasant who sent his daughter to pick up a basket of jujube-fruits and bring them to his mother-in-law, whose house was six miles[3] away. Her little brother followed her. He was a little over ten years old, and they walked together hand in hand. At sunset, however, they lost their way. They met then an old woman, who asked: "Where are you going?" They answered: "We want to visit our maternal grandmother." The woman said: "It's I."

---

* Huang Chengzeng: Guangyu chuxinxhi. 1803. Vol. 10, chap. 19, pp. 12A-13B. Translated from the Chinese into German by Annette Specht; translated into English by Günter Lontzen and Jacques Barchilon.

[1] "She" is the chief district of the prefecture of Huizhou in the south of the province of Anhui.

[2] Until now the "Wan Shan" (Wan Mountains) could not be localized in "She" for lack of suitable maps.

[3] A Chinese mile is equivalent to about one-third of an English mile.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

The two children said: "We children[4] remember our mother's words: 'There are seven moles on my mother's face.' In that regard, old woman, you don't look like her." She said: "Just so! But just now as I was separating rice from its husks, my face became covered with dust. I'll go wash it." Then she went to the bank of the mountain stream and gathered up seven shells. She put them about her face and returned to the children and said: "Look here, see the moles." And so they believed the woman and followed her.

They passed through the dark forest and came along a narrow path. They reached then a dwelling that was like a cave. The woman said: "Uncle Er[5] has just now ordered the workers to select trees to build a separate hall.[6] But for now our dwelling is here in the cave." So with little delay the two children followed her into the cave. The old woman was very slow in her movements,[7] but she prepared a complete supper. After the meal

---

[4] The address "er" of the children for themselves or of the old woman ("we (you) children" respectively "I (you) child"), often used in this text, is unusual and possibly comes from a dialect; in the following it is omitted.

[5] The name "Er" is unusual in China, and another person of this name has not been found.

[6] A hall (ancestral hall) was the center of a settlement.

[7] The statement that the old woman (she names herself in this manner) is "very slow" explains the complete action of the tale: She is the oldest tiger in the area and as a tiger, as well as in the transformation to a woman, old and very frail; therefore, she has to resort to some ruses in order to have a chance to eat both the children. Thus she weeps when the second prey seems to escape, because she only seldom gets a victim, and therefore she needs the help of the other tigers at the end of the tale.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

she told them to go to bed. Then the woman asked: "Of the two of you, who is fatter? That one is to serve me as a bolster and prop up my chest." The brother said: "I am fatter." Thus he served as the bolster at the head of the woman's bed; the girl then slept at her feet. They were hardly lying in bed when the girl felt touched by a hairy skin. She asked what it was. The woman answered: "[This is] a worn-out sheepskin of Uncle Er. If it is cold, I wear it when I sleep."

About midnight an eating noise was heard. The girl asked what it was. The woman answered: "I am eating your dried jujube-fruits.[8] The night is cold and long, and I am old; I can't bear the hunger." The girl said: "I am hungry, too." The woman gave her a berry; [but] it turned out to be a cold human finger. The girl jumped up in terror and said: "I have to go out and relieve myself." The woman replied: "There are a great many tigers in the forest. You could run into a tiger's mouth. Be careful." The girl said: "Tie a thick rope around my leg, [and] pull it in order to bring me back should [the danger] become urgent." The woman agreed. She tied a rope around the [girl's] leg and took the other end. The girl set out and walked along with the stretched rope. Then in the moonlight she noticed that [the rope] was a [long] gut. Hastily she removed it from her leg and climbed up a tree in order to escape. The woman waited for a long time. Her calls went

[8] *Ziziphus jujuba*, otherwise called "Chinese date." It is about the size of an egg. In the winter the fruits are eaten dried. It can be said that a dried fruit has somewhat the shape of a finger.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

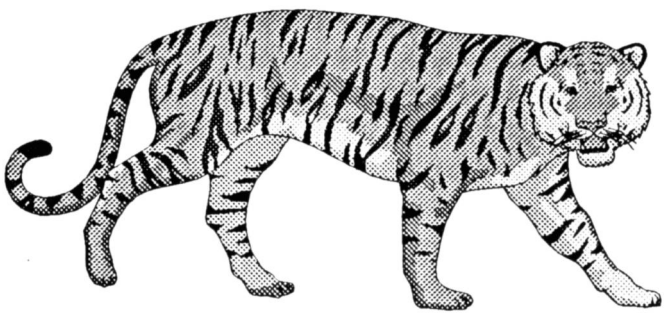
unanswered. She went on calling out: "Come here and listen to the old woman's words: Don't expose your skin to the cold wind, [otherwise] you will come back sick, and tomorrow your mother will say I didn't take care of you." After that she pulled at the end of the long gut. When she got it back, it was only the gut, and not the girl. The woman wept and set out calling something like that [sic]. [Finally] she made out the sight of the girl in the tree. She called her to come down but got no answer. So the old woman frightened the girl by saying that there were tigers in the trees. The girl answered: "It is still better to be in the tree than on the sleeping-mat. In truth, you are a tiger and]you] have heartlessly devoured my brother." The woman went off very angrily.

Soon afterwards day was breaking, [and] a carrier of burden passed by. The girl called to him: "Save me, there are tigers here." The carrier hid his clothes in the tree and went away with her. Afterwards the woman returned leading two tigers. She pointed at the tree and said that there would be a human being there. The tigers examined the tree and found the clothes. They thought the woman had deceived them and became angry. Together they devoured the woman and ran away.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

Master Huang says:

He who wishes to harm others by means of fraud and deception is defeated himself in the end. But there must be someone meeting him who is not yet defeated. If a human being meets a creature who is both a tiger and an old woman, he should be careful.

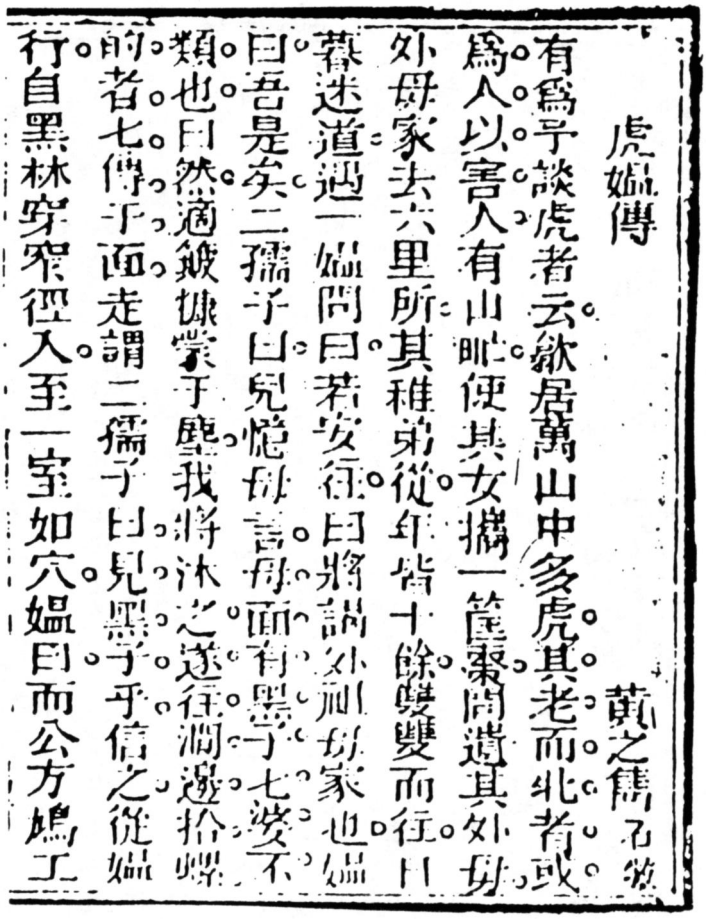


This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION OF "THE TALE OF THE TIGER-WOMAN"

The preceding translation from the Chinese was carefully checked against the original by Professor Victoria Cass in the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures at the University of Colorado at Boulder. While the English text printed here may differ somewhat from that submitted by Dr. Lontzen, it is as faithful as possible to the original, while being relatively clear and understandable to this century's English or American reader. The text was taken from the *Guangyu chuxinzhi* by Huang Chengzeng, Vol. 10, Ch. 19, pp. 12A-13B.

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



虎媪傳

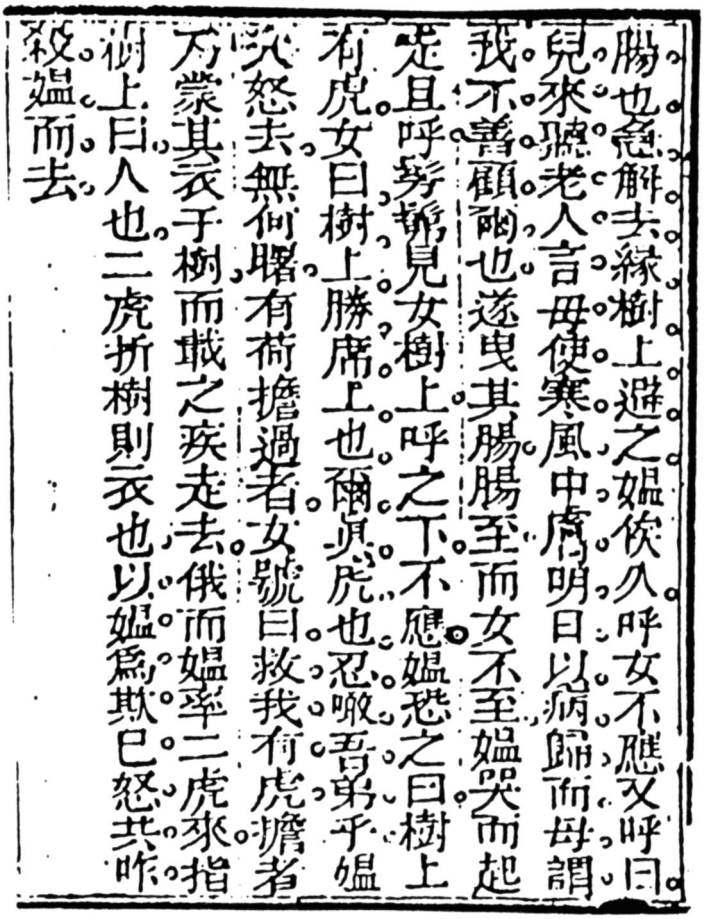
黃之雋 名敬

有爲予談虎者云歙居萬山中多虎其老而北者或爲人以害人有山甿便其女攜一筐棗問遺其外母外母家去六里所其稚弟從牛背十餘雙雙而往日暮迷道過一媪問曰若安往曰將詣外祖母家也媪曰吾是矣二孺子曰見恠毋言母面有黑子七婆不類也曰然適被縶于虎我將沐之遂往澗邊拾螺前者七傳于面走謂二孺子曰見黑子乎信之從媪行自黑林穿窅徑入至一室如穴媪曰而公方鳩工

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

擇木別搆爲堂今暫棲于此不則兩兒來老人多慢也貞貞父餐飯已命之寢媪曰兩兒誰肥肥者枕我而撫之懷抱曰余肥遂枕媪而寢女寢于足飢寢女憐其體有毛曰何也媪曰而公敝羊裘也天寒衣以寢耳夜半聞食聲女曰何也媪曰食敝裘脯也夜寒且永吾年老不忍飢女曰兒亦飢與一裘則冷然人指也女大駭起曰兒如厠媪曰山深多虎恐遭虎口慎勿起女曰婆以大繩縛兒足有急則曳以歸媪諾遂繩縶其足而操其末女遂起曳繩走乃視之則

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

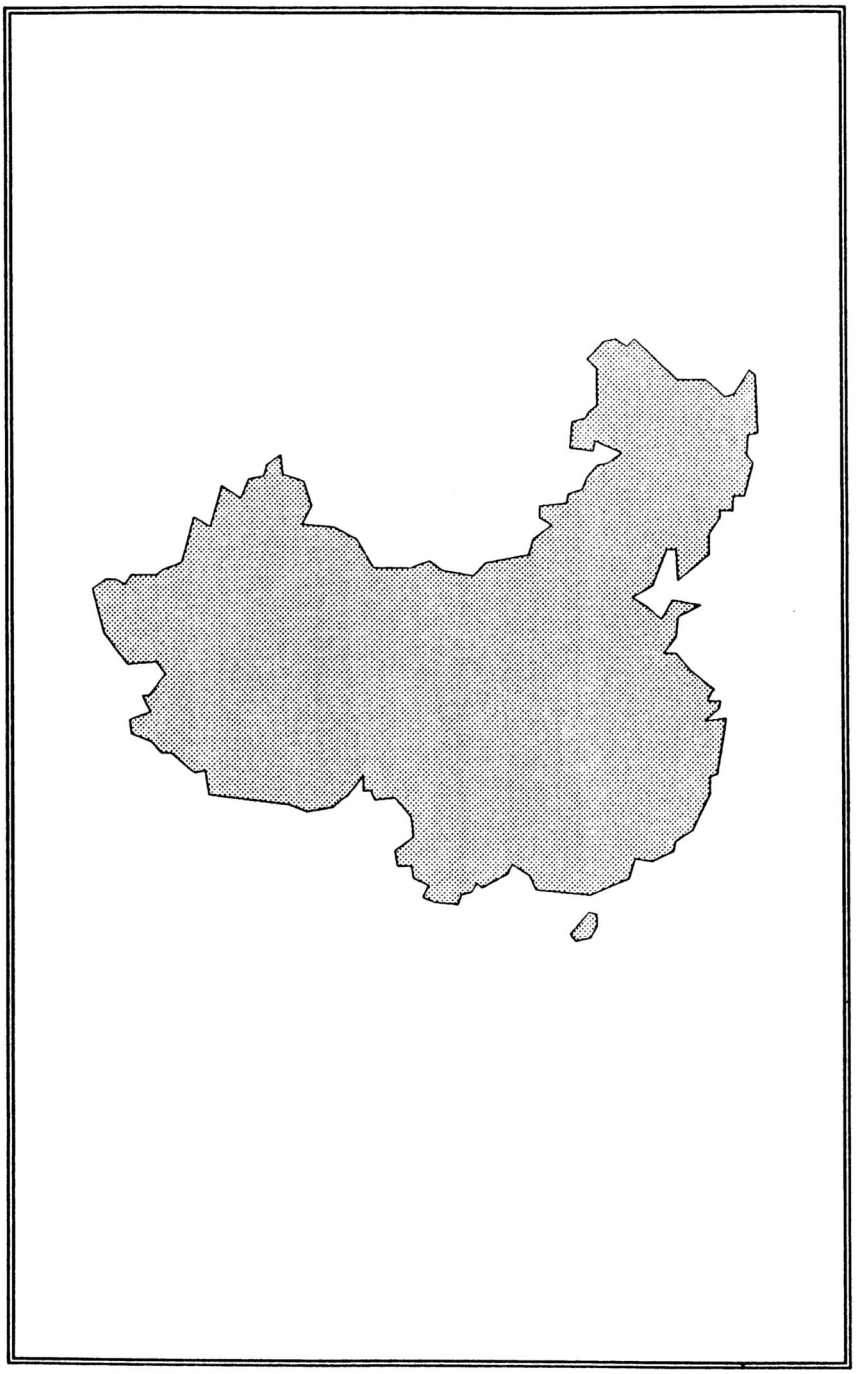


腸也。急解去。緣樹上避之。媪俟久。呼女不應。又呼曰。兒來。聽老人言。毋使寒風中虐。明日以病歸。而母謂我不善顧。祠也。遂曳其腸。腸至而女不至。媪哭而起。走且呼。旁舍聞。見女樹上。呼之下。不應。媪恐之曰。樹上有虎。女曰。樹上勝席上也。祠。貞。虎也。忍。嘅。吾弟乎。媪大怒去。無何。暮有荷擔過者。女號曰。救我。有虎擔者。方蒙其衣于樹。而戢之。疾走去。俄而媪率二虎來。指樹上曰。人也。二虎折樹。則衣也。以媪爲欺己。怒共咋殺媪而去。

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

黃子曰飾詐害世終以自敗逭其未敗也必有中之者人苟遇虎而媕者可勿愼哉

This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



This content downloaded from 129.82.28.144 on Thu, 03 Dec 2015 20:30:40 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions